United Nations E/CN.6/2000/PC/L.1

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: Limited
24 January 2000
Original: English

Commission on the Status of women acting as the preparatory committee for the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"
Third session
3-17 March 2000
Item 2 of the provisional agenda*
Preparations for the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action

Proposed outcome document submitted by the Chairperson of the Preparatory Committee

I. Introduction

1. The Governments which came together at the special session of the General Assembly have reaffirmed their commitment to the goals and objectives contained in the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, reviewed and appraised progress in the implementation of the Platform for Action, identified new challenges and trends affecting the full implementation of the Platform for Action and agreed upon further actions and initiatives to ensure that commitments for gender equality, development and peace are fully realized.

2. Since 1996, the Commission on the Status of Women has reviewed progress in each of the 12 critical areas of concern and adopted further actions for accelerated implementation. Together with the Platform for Action, these actions continue to form the basis for further progress and accountability to the world's women and towards the achievement of gender equality, development and peace in the twenty-first century.

3. In implementing and advancing the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action, an integrated approach should be adopted that encompasses policy, legislative and programme measures. These measures must be supported by institutional arrangements, adequate data, targets and monitoring mechanisms, as well as allocation of sufficient resources.

* E/CN.6/2000/PC/1.

00-25911 (E) 310100

II. Achievements and obstacles in the implementation of the 12 critical areas of the Platform for Action

A. Women and poverty

4. *Achievements*: Major accomplishments in this area include the recognition of the gender dimensions of poverty and efforts to mainstream a gender perspective into policies and programmes. Progress has been made by pursuing a two-pronged approach of promoting employment and income-generating activities for women and providing basic social services, including education and health care. Micro-credit for women has emerged as a successful strategy for economic empowerment. The situation of female-headed households has received more policy support. Global understanding of gender and poverty issues has been enhanced through research and the development of conceptual tools for gender impact assessments.

5. *Obstacles*: Many factors have contributed to widening economic inequality between women and men including income inequality, unemployment and deepening of poverty levels of the most vulnerable groups, especially rural and poor women. High debt burdens, military spending and low levels of development assistance thwart national efforts to combat poverty. Unequal access to capital, resources and labour markets as well as socio-cultural practices hinder women's economic empowerment and exacerbate the feminization of poverty. Structural adjustment programmes have often meant budget cuts on basic social services, including education and health, aggravating illiteracy and maternal mortality of poor women. The absence of data disaggregated by sex and age and analyses prevents the accurate assessment of unpaid work among women.

B. Education and training for women

6. *Achievements*: Progress was achieved in girls education and training at all levels, especially where there was sufficient political commitment and resource allocation. Measures were taken in all regions to initiate alternative education systems to reach girls in indigenous communities and other disadvantaged groups to encourage girls to pursue non-conventional fields of study and to remove gender biases from education.

7. *Obstacles*: Efforts to eradicate illiteracy among women and to increase their access to all levels and types of education were constrained by the lack of resources to improve educational infrastructure and undertake educational reforms; persisting gender discrimination and bias; sex-segregated occupational stereotyping in schools and communities; and insufficient attention to the link between women's enrolment in higher educational institutions and labour market dynamics.

C. Women and health

8. *Achievements*: Achievements include: a reduction in maternal mortality; increased use of modern contraceptives; the testing and development of male contraceptives; increased attention to human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) infection among women; the introduction of a gender perspective into health-related educational activities, including gender-specific tobacco and drug prevention and rehabilitation programmes; increased recognition of the specific health problems of older women; better prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases; and increased attention to women's mental health.

9. *Obstacles*: The absence of a holistic approach to health care for women and girls throughout the life-cycle constrained progress and was exacerbated by a lack of gender-sensitive health research and technology, data disaggregated by sex and age and user-friendly indicators. A shortage of financial and human resources, aggravated by the privatization of health sectors, had resulted in inadequate infrastructure and service delivery. The adjustment of legal regulations and programmes to international standards remained limited.

D. Violence against women

10. *Achievements*: Governments have initiated policy reforms and mechanisms such as interdepartmental committees, guidelines and protocols to address violence. Governments have also introduced or reformed laws to protect women from various forms of violence, including sexual assault, harassment and

trafficking. Progress has been made in services for abused women, including shelters, hot lines and special police units. Education for law enforcement, medical personnel and welfare workers is being promoted. Educational materials for women and public awareness campaigns have been developed. The eradication of female genital mutilation has received international policy support, including the appointment of a Special Ambassador by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

11. *Obstacles*: A lack of understanding of the root causes of violence against women hinders efforts. Inadequate data on the various forms of violence further impede informed policy-making. Socio-cultural attitudes and values reinforce women's subordinate place in society. Although improving, the response of legal officials, especially the criminal justice officials, is weak in many countries, while prevention strategies remain fragmented and reactive.

E. Women and armed conflict

12. *Achievements*: The statutes and rules of the International Tribunal on the Former Yugoslavia, the International Criminal Tribunal on Rwanda and of the International Criminal Court, adopted in 1998, incorporate gender concerns and gender-sensitive prosecutorial policies. There is wider recognition that armed conflict has different impacts on women and men and that a gender-sensitive application of international human rights and humanitarian law by the armed forces is important and, can be strengthened through training. Women's potential contribution to peace-building, peacemaking and conflict resolution is recognized. Guidelines for the protection of refugee women have been adopted and gender-based persecution has been accepted as a basis for refugee status in some countries. Civics courses on non-violent conflict resolution have been introduced.

13. *Obstacles*: The absence, at all levels, of women from decision-making positions related to peacekeeping, peace-building, post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction presents serious obstacles. The changing pattern of conflict, marked by the targeting of civilians and the involvement of non-State actors, has had an adverse impact on women and girls. Wide access to weapons, facilitated by the proliferation of and trade in arms, and particularly small arms, has further aggravated armed conflicts.

F. Women and the economy

14. *Achievements*: Governments have enacted legislation to comply with international labour conventions that promote women's economic rights, equal access to economic resources and equality in employment. Women's share of employment has substantially increased, especially in the service sector. Governments have made provisions to address discriminatory and abusive behaviour in the workplace and to prevent unhealthy working conditions, and have established funding mechanisms to promote women's roles in entrepreneurship, education, science, technical fields and decision-making. Legislation on maternity and paternity leave and child and family care benefits has been enacted to address women's multiple roles in the family and at work. Research has been conducted on barriers to economic empowerment and access to new information technologies faced by women.

15. *Obstacles*: Benefits of the growing global economy have been unevenly distributed, creating wider economic disparities, unsafe working environments and persistent gender inequality in the informal economy and rural sector. Many women still work in the rural sector and informal economy as subsistence producers with low levels of income and little social security. Women with comparable skills to men lag behind men in income and career mobility in the formal sector. Few countries have legislated in favour of women's ownership of land and other property. Failure to recognize that women have both productive and reproductive roles has meant that women have greater responsibilities and burdens as well as more unpaid work.

G. Women in power and decision-making

16. *Achievements*: An extensive discussion on women in power and their participation in decision-making and its importance for society continued at governmental and non-governmental levels, contributing to an increased awareness of the systemic changes that are needed to bring about a gender balance. An increasing number of countries applied affirmative action policies, including quota systems and targets, developed training programmes for women's leadership and introduced measures to reconcile the family and professional responsibilities of both women and men. National and international networks of women politicians,

parliamentarians, activists and professionals in various fields have been established or strengthened.

17. *Obstacles*: Despite general acceptance of the need for a gender balance in decision-making bodies at all levels, a gap between *de jure* and de facto equality has persisted. Traditionally assigned gender roles circumscribe women's choices in education and careers and compelled women to assume the burden for household responsibilities. Initiatives and programmes aimed at women's increased participation in decision-making were hindered by a lack of: human and financial resources for training and advocacy for political careers; accountability of elected officials for promoting gender equality and women's participation in public life; and support of other women by women in positions of power.

H. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women

18. *Achievements*: National machineries have been instituted and recognized as the institutional base acting as "catalysts" for promoting gender equality, gender mainstreaming and monitoring of the implementation of the Platform for Action. Progress has been achieved in terms of the visibility, status, outreach and coordination of activities of these machineries in incorporating gender mainstreaming in the work of ministries and in the inclusion of gender perspectives in legislation, policies, programmes and projects at national and international levels. They also contributed to the generation and dissemination of data disaggregated by sex and age, gender-sensitive research and documentation.

19. *Obstacles*: A lack of adequate financial and human resources is the main obstacle confronting national machineries, compounded by a lack of understanding of gender equality and gender mainstreaming, prevailing gender stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes, competing government priorities and insufficient links to civil society. The activities of the national machineries were also hindered by structural and communication problems within and among government agencies. In some cases, these machineries lack a clear mandate, tools, resources and experience in conducting monitoring and evaluation activities.

I. Human rights

20. *Achievements*: Legal reforms have been undertaken and discriminatory provisions have been eliminated in civil, penal and personal status law governing marriage and family relations, women's property and ownership rights and women's political, work and employment rights. Steps have been taken to realize women's de facto enjoyment of their human rights through the creation of an enabling environment, including the adoption of policy measures, the improvement of enforcement and monitoring mechanisms and the implementation of legal literacy and awareness campaigns. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women has been ratified or acceded to by 165 countries, and the Optional Protocol to the Convention has been adopted and signed by 25 States parties.

21. *Obstacles*: Discriminatory legislation still exists and family, civil and penal codes are still not fully gender sensitive. Legislative and regulatory gaps persist, perpetuating *de jure* as well as de facto inequality and discrimination. Women have insufficient access to the law, resulting from lack of legal literacy and resources, insensitivity and gender bias of law enforcement officials and the judiciary and the persistence of traditional and stereotypical attitudes.

J. Women and the media

22. *Achievements*: The placement of women in various high level decision-making positions has taken place and the establishment of local, national and international women's media networks has ensured global information dissemination, exchange of views and support to women's groups active in media work. The development of information and communication technologies, especially the Internet, has provided improved communication opportunities and has influenced the participation of women in the media. The number of women's media organizations and programmes has increased, facilitating the aims of increased participation and promotion of positive portrayals of women in the media. Progress has been made to combat negative images of women by establishing professional guidelines and voluntary codes of conduct encouraging fair gender portrayal and the use of non-sexist language in media programmes.

23. *Obstacles*: Women are still not employed in sufficient numbers in key decision-making positions to influence media policy. Negative images of women, stereotyped portrayals and pornography have increased in some instances, and journalists remain who are biased against women. The field of information and communications technologies is based on male norms and Western culture. Language barriers prevent some women from using the Internet. Development of and access to Internet infrastructure is limited and depends on political will, cooperative efforts and financial resources.

K. Women and the environment

24. *Achievements*: National environment policies and programmes have incorporated gender perspectives. Women's participation in decision-making has been enhanced, with more women assuming high-level and other posts in environmental agencies. Governments have formed partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In recognition of the link between poverty and environmental degradation, Governments have included income-generation activities for women, as well as training in natural resource management and environmental protection. Projects have been launched to preserve and utilize women's traditional knowledge in the management of natural resources.

25. *Obstacles*: There is a lack of public awareness about environmental issues and of the benefits of gender equality for promoting environmental protection. Environmental policies and programmes lack a gender perspective and fail to account for women's roles and contributions to environmental sustainability. The shortage of women in the formulation and execution of environmental policy and their under-representation in decision-making bodies is an aggravating factor.

L. The girl child

26. *Achievements*: Progress was made in primary and, to a lesser extent, in secondary and tertiary education for girls, owing to the creation of more gender-sensitive school environments, support mechanisms for pregnant girls and teenage mothers, increased non-formal education opportunities and enhanced attendance at science and technology classes. Increased attention was given to the health of the girl child, including the sexual and reproductive health of adolescents. An increasing number of countries introduced legislation to ban female genital mutilation and imposed heavier penalties on sex abusers and those involved in the commercial sexual exploitation of the girl child.

27. *Obstacles*: Traditional discriminatory attitudes against women and girls and inadequate awareness of the specific situation of the girl child, for example, domestic responsibilities which often prevent her from pursuing education, contribute to a lack of opportunities for girls to become self-reliant and independent. Programmes were hindered by a lack of financial and human resources, statistical data disaggregated by sex and age and technical capacity. There were few established national mechanisms to implement policies and programmes for the girl child and coordination among responsible institutions was insufficient.

III. New challenges and trends affecting the full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action

28. The review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action occurred in a rapidly changing global context. Since 1995, a number of issues have gained prominence or acquired new dimensions which pose additional challenges to the full implementation of the Platform and their implications for gender equality need to be analysed thoroughly. Consequently, further actions and initiatives are needed to respond to the following challenges and trends, some of which were partly addressed in the Platform.

29. The globalization process has caused policy shifts in favour of more open trade and financial flows, privatization of state-owned enterprises and lower public spending. This change has transformed patterns of production and accelerated technological advances in communication. Globalization has also affected cultural values, life styles, advertising and the media. Momentous political changes, including new forms of governance and more universal realization of human rights, has accompanied these trends. While globalization has brought greater economic

opportunities and autonomy to some women, others have become more vulnerable. Although in many countries the level of participation of the female labour force has risen, the increases in employment have not been matched by improvements in working conditions. Most women continue to be employed in low paid, part-time jobs marked by insecurity and by safety and health hazards. Women continue to be among the first to lose jobs and the last to be rehired.

30. Increasing disparities in the economic situation among and within countries, coupled with a growing economic dependence of States on external factors, have hindered their ability to provide social protection and social security as well as funding for the implementation of the Platform for Action. The decreasing levels of funding available through international cooperation has further marginalized and excluded the world's poorest countries, within which women are among the poorest citizens. Consequently, this increasing feminization of poverty has undermined efforts to achieve gender equality. Limited funding at the state-level coupled with declining development assistance make it imperative that innovative approaches to the allocation of existing resources be employed, not only by Governments but also by their partners in the NGO and private sectors. In order to address gender equality and to utilize existing resources in a gender-sensitive manner, gender analysis of national budgets is needed to determine whether the impact of expenditures on women and men are different.

31. Science and technology, as fundamental components of development, are transforming patterns of production, creating new jobs and ways of working, and contributing to the establishment of a knowledge-based society. Technological change brings new opportunities. Many women worldwide are effectively using new communications technologies for networking, advocacy, exchange of information and e-commerce initiatives. Nevertheless, it should be recognized that millions of the world's poorest women and men still do not have access to these facilities and are at risk of being excluded from this new field and the opportunities it presents.

32. The patterns of migratory flows of labour are changing. Women are increasingly involved in international short-term labour migration, mainly in domestic work and the entertainment industry. While this situation increases their earning opportunities and self-reliance, it also exposes them to the risk of trafficking, and other forms of abuse, in particular if they are poor, uneducated, unskilled or are working as illegal immigrants.

33. In recent years there have been developments towards establishing new, broad alliances and coalitions of Governments, trade unions, professional and consumer associations, foundations and NGOs within and across countries to promote human rights, codes of conduct, and socially responsible forms of investment that would include provisions for gender equality.

34. Increasing acceptance of gender equality has emerged, based on a shared set of principles, norms, rules and institutional mechanisms and on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol. Nonetheless, many countries have difficulty applying these international norms and standards to the national setting.

35. Despite an increased understanding of women's human rights and appreciation for women's contribution to society, gross under-representation of women in decision-making bodies related to politics, the economy and conflict resolution mechanisms persists. The absence of women hinders the inclusion of a gender perspective in these critical spheres of influence. Given that applied measures to increase women's participation in decision-making have been insufficient to reach full gender equality, new approaches and a renewed commitment at all levels are necessary.

36. Demographic trends, including increased life expectancy and lower mortality rates, have contributed to ageing of the population. Given the gap between male and female life expectancy, the number of widows and older single women has increased considerably. Societies have much to gain from the knowledge and life experience of older women. Older women should be encouraged to assume non-traditional roles in public life and decision-making. At the same time, mechanisms to ensure their rights and quality of life, as well as address their needs, should be instituted, in view of the weakening of traditional family support systems and diminishing state welfare programmes

37. The progression of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in the developing world has had a strong impact on women. The burden of care for people living with HIV,

including orphans, falls on women, as state infrastructures are inadequate to respond to the challenges being posed. Women infected with HIV often suffer from discrimination and stigma. Issues related to mother-to-child transmission, breastfeeding, abortion, partner notification and provision of essential drugs, including azidothymidine (AZT), have not been sufficiently addressed.

38. The increase in casualties and damage caused by natural disasters has raised awareness of the inefficiency of the existing approaches and intervention methods in responding to such emergency situations, in which women, more often than men, are burdened with the responsibility of meeting the immediate daily needs of their families. This situation has increased awareness that a gender perspective must be incorporated whenever disaster mitigation and recovery strategies are being developed.

39. There has been an increase in violent conflict, in particular, intra-State armed conflict, often rooted in political transition, economic dislocation, fragile civil society and a weakening of the State. Various forces, including arms and drugs dealers and organized crime syndicates, capitalize on existing tensions. The majority of the casualties are civilian women and children. There has also been an increase in gender-based violence, including rape, and the intentional spread of the HIV/AIDS virus as a deliberate weapon of war to annihilate the enemy. There are increased efforts at the international level to bring the perpetrators of war-related gender-based crimes to justice, end their immunity and compensate the victims.

40. Violence against women in all its forms has become better understood, more broadly discussed by the public and addressed by various legal and policy measures. Numerous women's networks continue to advocate the eradication of domestic violence and the position that national authorities be held accountable for the protection and promotion of the human rights of women.

41. The changing context of gender relations, as well as the discussion on gender equality and reproductive rights, has led to increased reassessment of gender roles. This has further encouraged a discussion on the roles and responsibilities of women and men in working towards gender equality and the need for changing the stereotypical roles and identities of women and men.

IV. Measures, actions and initiatives to overcome obstacles and to address new challenges and trends in the full and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action

42. Five years after the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action, Governments now recommit themselves to its full implementation and ensure that the new challenges are also addressed. Governments commit themselves to take additional steps in order to achieve the goal of gender equality, development and peace in the twenty-first century and call upon the international community, including organizations of the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions and other international and regional intergovernmental bodies, parliaments, civil society, including the private sector and non-governmental organizations, to support government efforts and to develop programmes of their own to achieve full and effective implementation.

A. Gender equality

43. The achievement of equality between women and men — gender equality — is a paramount goal of Governments and the international community. It is both an end in itself, and a means to the realization of the goals of development and peace.

44. Achieving gender equality includes ensuring equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men, girls and boys. It implies that women's as well as men's interests, concerns, experiences and priorities are an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all actions in all areas of societal development. While all critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action have gender equality dimensions, several are particularly pertinent to the realization of this goal, and several emerging issues also need to be addressed in this context. Education and training for women throughout their life cycle, especially for the girl child,

are an essential tool for achieving gender equality. The full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all women and girls is a prerequisite for realizing gender equality, development and peace. This process will be facilitated by women's equal participation at all levels of decision-making. Full attention to the needs of the girl child will also accelerate achievement of the goal of gender equality. Institutional mechanisms, especially national machinery for the advancement of women, are instrumental in ensuring that adequate structures and frameworks are in place. The media have the potential to make a significant contribution to the achievement of the goal of gender equality.

Further actions at the policy level to achieve the goal of gender equality

45. Political will and commitment are necessary to ensure the adoption in all areas of comprehensive and holistic policies with gender equality as a critical factor. Such policies need to define goals and strategies in terms of the interests, contributions rights and needs of women and men and to create equal opportunities and choices. Men need to be actively involved in efforts to achieve gender equality.

46. Governments should take action to:

(a) Ensure that the achievement of gender equality is the responsibility of all Governments by instituting more action-oriented programmes and benchmarks for measuring progress against time-bound targets;

(b) Make equal access to education by girls and completion of basic education a paramount goal of government educational policy;

(c) Adopt policies to close the gender gap in primary and secondary education by 2005 and to ensure universal primary education for both girls and boys by 2015, as advocated by several global conferences;

(d) Expand and encourage the use of specific, time-bound targets to achieve gender balance in the participation of women and men in all areas and at all levels of public life, especially in decision-making positions, in electoral processes and in political activities;

(e) Develop policies that target men, in particular younger men, on changing attitudes and behaviours concerning gender roles and responsibilities;

(f) Design policies that support women's enjoyment of all human rights and create an environment that does not tolerate violations of the rights of women and girls;

(g) Design all government information policies and strategies in a gender-sensitive manner;

(h) Encourage the media to actively support the realization of the goal of gender equality;

(i) Develop policy approaches that support women's ability to create, access and distribute information, including through access and use of new information technologies such as the Internet;

(j) Increase policy responses aimed at eradication of violence against girls, especially against sexual exploitation, prostitution, child pornography, trafficking and harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation;

(k) Design approaches to encourage the media, including through the Internet, to reduce and eliminate negative stereotyping of women and girls and the commercialization of sex and violence against women and girls.

47. United Nations entities, other international and regional intergovernmental bodies, especially those dealing with health, education and information, human rights and the environment, parliaments and civil society, including the private sector and NGOs should take action to support government efforts and continue and develop their own programmes for the full and effective implementation in these areas.

Further actions at the legal level to achieve the goal of gender equality

48. A non-discriminatory and gender-sensitive legislative framework ensures women's *de jure* equality and creates an enabling environment to turn rights into reality. Equality before the law and equal protection of the law, together with adequate means of redress against violations, knowledge about rights and access to resources and a supportive law enforcement system and judiciary will accelerate achievement of the goal of gender equality.

49. Governments should take action to:

(a) Repeal all discriminatory legislation by 2005;

(b) Create and maintain a non-discriminatory, as well as a gender-sensitive, legal environment, and eliminate legislative gaps that leave women and girls without protection of their rights;

(c) Review all existing, as well as future legislation to ensure compatibility and full compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;

(d) Improve knowledge and availability of, and accessibility to, remedies against denial or violations of rights, including effective and gender-sensitive courts, out-of-court procedures such as mediation or conciliation mechanisms, independent human rights institutions with explicit mandates on human rights of women and international judicial and quasi-judicial procedures such as the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;

(e) Develop and implement laws prohibiting customary or traditional practices that are violations of women's human rights and obstacles to the full enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms;

(f) Prosecute the perpetrators of all forms of violence against women and girls and sentence them appropriately.

Further actions at the institutional level to achieve the goal of gender equality

50. Strong national machineries for the advancement of women promote political commitment at the highest level and act as catalysts for open public debate on gender equality as a societal goal and elaboration of action programmes. They support and facilitate the development and adoption of policies, legislation, programmes and capacity-building for gender equality. They also support institutional structures and mechanisms across all levels and areas of government tasked with promoting gender equality through women's empowerment measures, implementing the mainstreaming strategy and creating organizational environments conducive to gender equality.

51. Governments should take action to:

(a) Provide adequate resources in national budgets for national machineries for the advancement of women so that they can implement their mandates;

(b) Create new, or reinforce existing, institutional mechanisms to work with national machineries and strengthen societal support for gender equality;

(c) Establish effective equal opportunities commissions;

(d) Encourage coalitions among NGOs, grassroots organizations and traditional, community and religious leaders for the protection and promotion of women's human rights;

(e) Establish the creation of institutional networks to support the career development and promotion of women;

(f) Facilitate the creation of alliances between governmental authorities, parliaments, the judiciary and women's rights groups to monitor compliance with non-discriminatory legislation.

52. Other actors such as United Nations entities, civil society and non-governmental organizations are particularly called upon to develop programmes in support of Governments in this area.

Further actions at the programme level to achieve the goal of gender equality

53. Specific programmes with goals for women are needed to ensure capacity-building and empowerment of women, which are essential to achieve gender equality. Such special programmes need to be complemented by efforts to mainstream a gender equality perspective into all governmental policies and programmes so that promotion of gender equality is a central part of all government interventions.

54. Governments should take action to:

(a) Continue efforts to fully implement national action plans modelled on the Platform for Action developed during the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, as well as international agreements, including international human rights instruments of particular relevance to women;

(b) Reach out to illiterate adult women through massive literacy campaigns using all modern technological means available and maintain acquired

knowledge through post-literacy training, aiming at reducing the female illiteracy rate to at least half of its 2000 level by 2010;

(c) Devise and implement programmes to reconciliate family and professional responsibilities for both men and women;

(d) Expand gender-awareness campaigns and gender training among women and men to combat the persistence of traditional stereotypes;

(e) Target journalists and media specialists, media associations, educational and training institutions to promote balanced and non-stereotyped portrayals of women;

(f) Implement radio and advertising campaigns emphasizing the equal value of girls and boys in society;

(g) Seek to create partnerships among Governments, international organizations, NGOs, the private sector, civil society, women and men in support of gender equality;

(h) Adopt incentive systems for the private sector and for educational establishments that facilitate and strengthen compliance with non-discriminatory legislation;

(i) Provide access to technology that enables women's organizations to build and maintain networks and to generate and share information;

(j) Adopt, or develop further, codes of conduct, professional guidelines and other self-regulatory guidelines for the media and the information industry to ensure women's equal access and opportunities as producers and consumers of media and information.

55. The United Nations and its system of organizations, professional media associations, schools of journalism, the private sector, NGOs, and women's groups in particular, are called upon to collaborate in implementing these actions.

Further actions to generate and disseminate data and information, and to set targets and establish monitoring mechanisms to achieve the goal of gender equality

56. Effective and coordinated change in policy, legislation and programmes for the achievement of gender equality requires a clear knowledge base of the situation of women and girls, time-bound targets and mechanisms to monitor progress. Efforts are also needed to ensure capacity-building for all actors involved and to increase transparency and accountability of actions taken towards the goal of gender equality.

57. Governments should take action to:

(a) Examine the causes for the decline in the enrolment of girls and boys at the primary and secondary levels in some countries, the rise in the number of females in tertiary education in many parts of the world and the consequences of these phenomena;

(b) Publish crime statistics regularly to increase transparency and map trends in law enforcement concerning violations of the rights of women;

(c) Support or conduct studies on the impact of measures to achieve gender equality;

(d) Improve the collection of comprehensive information about women throughout the life cycle, and of data disaggregated by sex and age;

(e) Study the role that new information technology can play in advancing gender equality;

(f) Conduct an in-depth survey on the impact of HIV/AIDS on women and girl children;

(g) Support women in senior positions to act as role models and mentors for other women and compile national rosters of possible women leaders;

(h) Undertake capacity-building, including through gender training, for all actors accountable for achieving gender equality;

(i) Provide information, education and training and equal access for women and girls to public goods and services;

(j) Implement curriculum changes in training for public officials to ensure attention to gender equality goals;

(k) Develop and use practical tools and indicators for gender mainstreaming, including gender-sensitive research, statistics and information;

(l) Conduct performance appraisals, measured by the achievement of gender equality goals;

(m) Establish targets, benchmarks and a clear time-frame for the implementation of gender-sensitive policies and programmes.

58. United Nations entities and other international bodies, particularly those developing statistical methodologies and data, universities and academic institutions, research institutes, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and other actors are called upon to assist in implementing these actions.

Further actions at the level of resource allocation to achieve the goal of gender equality

59. The realization of the goal of gender equality needs to be supported by the allocation of resources for specific and targeted activities, as well as the explicit attention to this goal in all governmental budgetary action. To be successful and support transformative change, efforts to mainstream a gender equality perspective also need to be supported by human and financial resources.

60. Governments should take action to:

(a) Promote international cooperation to subsidize States' efforts in the development and use of gender-related analysis and statistics;

(b) Incorporate gender equality perspectives into budgetary processes;

(c) Incorporate an allocation for gender equality programmes in national budgets.

B. Development

61. The endorsement of the Platform of Action by Governments and the international community meant an agreement to a common development agenda with gender equality as an underlying principle. Moreover, it established that sustainable human development for all societies is possible only when women become full and equal partners in and benefit from development policy-making and practice. This new approach to development is integral to the achievement of the two other goals of gender equality and peace.

62. The women in development concept has evolved from a focus on women's conditions and basic needs to a more holistic and systemic approach based on the consideration of gender relations and roles. The recent trends towards globalization, liberalization, privatization and information and communications technologies pose new challenges for achieving gender equality in social and economic development. Policies and programmes should be formulated to achieve the goal of sustainable human development, eliminate increasing and disproportionate poverty among women and the lack of secure livelihoods and safety nets for women in the labour market. Support for gender mainstreaming with regard to macro-economic policy and institutions should be given to ensure that development dividends of the new economy are shared equitably. The right to good health and well-being and access to health services are entitlements that are increasingly elusive, particularly in the face of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the growing proportion of older women. There is a need to integrate women's knowledge and priorities in conservation and management of environmental resources since a majority of the world's women are subsistence producers who depend on these resources. Governments call upon United Nations organizations, NGOs and civil society organizations for an effective response, if the goal of sustainable human development is to be achieved. Strong political will and commitment to making investments in these critical areas is a prerequisite for achieving the goals of human development, gender equality and peace.

Further actions at the policy level to achieve the goal of gender-sensitive development

63. Policy commitments to expand human capabilities and ensure women's active participation in economic and social processes are essential for achieving the goal of sustainable human development. They establish the framework for women's entitlements to economic resources, services and institutions as well as participation in decision-making and management. The policy-making process requires the partnership of men and women at all levels.

64. *Governments should take action to:*

(a) Set explicit time-bound targets for women's full and equal participation of key policy-making levels in strategic and development institutions, including ministries of finance and planning, agriculture, education, health, environment;

(b) Support the Cologne initiative for the reduction of debt, particularly the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative, and the

provision that funds saved should be used to support anti-poverty programmes that address gender dimensions;

(c) Establish social development funds to minimize the negative effects of structural adjustment programmes on women and the disproportionate burden borne by poor women;

(d) Adopt special measures to improve the situation of rural women and to empower them to ensure the socio-economic security of their households;

(e) Apply affirmative action measures to give women equal access to capacity-building training programmes provided by Governments and United Nations organizations to enhance women's participation in decision-making at all levels, including as planners, managers and executives of anti-poverty, health and environmental protection and resource management programmes;

(f) Endorse a gender-sensitive global poverty eradication strategy during the Millennium Assembly in September 2000.

65. United Nations organizations, including the Bretton Woods institutions and NGOs should:

(a) Assist Governments in developing gender-sensitive responses to humanitarian crises resulting from natural disasters and environmental degradation;

(b) Ensure women's full and equal participation in sustainable reconstruction efforts.

Further actions at the legal level to achieve the goal of gender sensitive development

66. New regulatory measures need to be introduced to legislative reform processes, which are already under way as a result of globalization, privatization and liberalization, to ensure equal economic rights and opportunities. This is particularly important for issues of social security, land ownership and inheritance.

67. Governments should take action to:

(a) Apply international and national labour laws to irregular forms of work, such as outsourcing, part-time labour and informal subcontracting, created by globalization and which remain unprotected by standard labour laws;

(b) Ensure that national legislative and administrative reform processes linked to land reform, decentralization and reorientation to a market economy give women equal rights with men to economic resources, including access to credit, ownership and control over land and other assets;

(c) Work with private sector partners and media networks at the national level, particularly in the area of information and communications technologies, to ensure that issues of equal access for women and men are taken into account;

(d) Adopt national legislation consistent with the Convention on Biological Diversity to protect the knowledge, innovations and practices of women in indigenous and local communities relating to traditional medicines, biodiversity and indigenous technologies;

(e) Review and revise existing health legislation to reflect the new demands for service and care by women and girls as a result of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and new knowledge about women's needs for specific mental and occupation health programmes and for the ageing process;

(f) Discourage, through the media and other means, customary laws and practices, such as early marriage, polygamy, that increase women's and girls susceptibility to HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Further actions at the institutional level to achieve the goal of gender-sensitive development

68. Mainstreaming a gender perspective into existing institutions and the reforms under way to meet the challenges of the changing world order are essential. This is essential to ensure women's equal access to formal institutions such as banks, trade unions, credit associations and health care delivery systems. Institutional changes are a strategic and important aspect of creating an enabling environment for gender-sensitive development.

69. Governments should take action to:

(a) Support the intermediary role of NGOs in establishing linkages between financial institutions and disadvantaged women in rural and urban areas;

(b) Governments should, with the assistance of international organizations, establish "lending windows" with simplified procedures and collateral

requirements that specifically cater to the savings and credit needs of women;

(c) Set quotas for women's participation in local development bodies as part of the decentralization processes taking place in many countries around the world;

(d) Support women's NGOs in providing services as one strategy to increase Government's capacity to meet commitments made at the International Conference on Population and Development regarding access to quality and affordable health services, including sexual, reproductive health care and family planning information and services, as well as maternal and emergency obstetric care;

(e) Review health sector reform initiatives and their impact on women's health and, in particular, on rural and poor urban health service delivery;

(f) Provide support systems, including adequate medication, housing and monitoring for women and girls infected by HIV/AIDS;

(g) Create social security systems for poor women in view of the uncertainties and conditions of work associated with globalization.

Further actions at the programme level to achieve the goal of gender-sensitive development

70. Programme support to enhance women's development opportunities, potentials and activities need to be undertaken at two levels: women-specific programmes aimed at meeting the special needs of women for capacity-building and organizational development; and the application of a gender mainstreaming approach in all programme formulation and implementation activities. It is particularly important to look for new entry points for programming provided by emerging trends and challenges.

71. Governments should take action to:

(a) Re-orient agricultural extension services, including credit, to meet needs of women producers and to strengthen women's vital role in providing food security;

(b) Support the critical role of women's NGOs in the implementation of Agenda 21, the integration of a gender perspective in the design and implementation of environmental conservation and resource management mechanisms, programmes and infrastructure;

(c) Integrate mental health services into primary health-care systems and train health workers to recognize and care for girls and women of all ages who have experienced any form of gender-based violence;

(d) Provide training opportunities for girls to develop their skills in leadership, advocacy and conflict resolution;

(e) Re-orient health information, services and training for health workers to incorporate gender-sensitivity and reflect user's perspectives with regard to interpersonal and communications skills and user's right to privacy and confidentiality;

(f) Support NGOs in efforts to develop community strategies to protect women of all ages from HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases; provide care to infected girls, women and their families and mobilize all parts of the community;

(g) Establish programmes to build the capacity of women's NGOs and organizations to use new information and communications technologies in their development activities.

72. United Nations entities and international organizations should continue to develop an integrated programme of support for the 12 critical areas of concern contained in the Platform.

Further actions to generate data and targets to set monitoring mechanisms to achieve the goal of gender-sensitive development

73. Reviews over the past five years by almost all countries have indicated the lack of reliable data disaggregated by sex and age and the extent to which this had hampered informed planning and programming for achieving gender equality.

74. Governments should take action to:

(a) Provide government statistics offices with institutional and financial support in order that their services may be demand-driven and enable them to respond to requests for data disaggregated by sex and age for use in the formulation of gender-sensitive statistical indicators for monitoring and impact assessment;

(b) Undertake research on emerging trends that are creating new gender disparities, a migration of woman and its effects on the household economy and on new conditions of employment and the effects on gender roles and relations;

(c) Develop national capacity to undertake policy-oriented research and impact studies by universities, national research/training institutes to enable knowledge-based policy-making;

(d) Develop and test indicators on the extent of violence against women, including against women migrant workers.

Further actions at the level of resource allocation to achieve the goal of gender-sensitive development

75. An indicator of political commitment to the goals of sustainable human development is the allocation of adequate resources to support gender-sensitive activities. Mobilization of human and financial resources is paramount in ensuring women's equal partnership and participation in and benefit from, development and in effectively meeting new and emerging challenges.

76. Governments should take action to:

(a) Encourage developed countries to reach the target of committing 0.7 per cent of their gross domestic product (GDP) for official development assistance, thereby increasing the flow of resources for gender equality, development and peace;

(b) Establish specific allocations in national budgets for supporting development programmes for women;

(c) Accelerate the implementation of the 20/20 initiative;

(d) Develop capacity of women NGOs to mobilize resources to ensure sustainability of their development activities.

77. United Nations organizations, international and regional organizations should take action to:

(a) Assist Governments in the above-mentioned areas;

(b) Build capacity among NGOs for resource mobilization;

(c) Allocate resources to regional and national programmes in the above-mentioned areas.

C. Peace

78. The maintenance of international peace and security, securing social justice and human rights and of promoting social progress and better standards of life is the central goal of Governments and the international community. Peace is linked to gender equality and development.

79. Global, lasting peace cannot be attained without the full participation of women at the government and international levels, particularly in decision-making. Gender considerations must play an integral part in conflict resolution and efforts to bring about peace. It must be implicit that women's as well as men's interests, concerns, experiences and priorities should be incorporated in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all actions in all areas of peace. Although all critical areas of concern in the Platform for Action have peace dimensions, some are more pertinent to the realization of this goal. Several emerging issues, including the need for women to participate in decision-making in all fora dealing with foreign affairs, defence, disarmament issues and peace-building, also need to be addressed.

80. Violence against women is a major obstacle to the achievement of gender equality, development and peace and has emerged as a major human rights concern. Actions to eradicate violence against women at the domestic, national and international level are essential. Armed conflict and emergency situations impose serious threats to the lives of women and children.

Further actions at the policy level to achieve the goal of peace

81. Political will and commitment are necessary to ensure the adoption of comprehensive policies to ensure peace. Such policies need to involve women at all levels of policy-making and planning and to ensure that a gender perspective is included.

82. Governments should take action to:

(a) Ensure that women are involved in decision-making at all levels, including as special envoys and special representatives;

(b) Increase numbers of women to at least 30 to 35 per cent in the civilian police forces and the military, in particular at decision-making levels;

(c) Eliminate impunity for breaches of human rights and humanitarian law through strict application of these standards, especially for military personnel, including peacekeeping forces;

(d) Involve more women in conflict resolution negotiations, peacemaking and peace-building;

(e) Enhance existing and develop further mechanisms to ensure access to education and health services to refugees, especially women and girls.

83. The organizations of the United Nations system should take action to:

(a) Achieve the goal of 50/50 per cent women on all posts at the professional level and above, in particular at the higher levels in their secretariats, in hiring of consultants in peacekeeping missions and in all activities and report thereon;

(b) Introduce, develop and monitor special activities, measures and affirmative action for women staff in areas of recruitment and promotion until the goal is reached.

84. United Nations entities, and civil society, including NGOs and the private sector, should support Governments in these areas.

Further actions at the legal level to achieve peace

85. Implementation of gender-sensitive national and international legislation eliminating violence against women and armed conflict are essential for peace. International instruments, ongoing negotiations and international discussions aimed at the limitation of armed conflict and discouraging gender-based violence, including rape, encourage the attainment of peace.

86. Governments should take action to:

(a) Eliminate discriminatory laws and practices enshrining the notion of women's inferiority to men;

(b) Introduce effective legislation in all States to protect women against violence and harmonize all laws to ensure that victims of such violence are not harmed again;

(c) Encourage the introduction of effective legislation and other measures to combat the trafficking and sexual exploitation of women and girls;

(d) Introduce measures to limit access to weapons by 2005;

(e) Treat all forms of violence against women as a public offence punishable by law;

(f) Encourage universal ratification of the Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court by 2005 and support development of rules under the Statute to ensure that they incorporate gender-sensitivity;

(g) Establish family courts and legislation to handle criminal matters relating to domestic violence.

Further actions at the institutional level to achieve peace

87. Strong institutional mechanisms ensure political commitment at the highest level to the goal of implementing and maintaining peace. They support and facilitate the development and adoption of policies, legislation, programmes and capacity-building for peace. Law enforcement agencies have an important role in dealing with domestic violence.

88. Governments, and the international community should take action to:

(a) Support the work of the international tribunals, in particular with regard to gender-sensitivity;

(b) Support the activities of women's networks working to eradicate all forms of violence against women;

(c) Ensure that all actors are held accountable for the protection and promotion of the human rights of women.

89. United Nations entities, civil society and NGOs should assist in this regard.

Further actions at the programme level to achieve peace

90. Women's participation in and contribution to programmes designed to bring about peace should be encouraged.

91. Governments and the international community should take action to:

(a) Launch an international "zero tolerance" campaign concerning violence against women by the end of 2001;

(b) Design and implement innovative programmes to raise the consciousness of all members of society, in particular children, about the importance of non-violent conflict resolution.

Further actions to generate and disseminate data, and to set targets and monitoring mechanisms

92. Policy, legislative and programme development will be supported by a population well-informed about the goals of peace and conflict resolution and women's role in achieving these goals.

93. Governments, should take action to:

(a) Ensure education and training for all actors in contact with victims of violence;

(b) Create an adequate statistics base and clearing-house of good practices and lessons learned on various forms of violence against women by the end of 2001;

(c) Undertake impact analysis of measures on violence against women;

(d) Ensure greater international cooperation and national attention in acquiring accurate data on violence against women;

(e) Ensure widespread dissemination of information and knowledge on the application of human rights and humanitarian law standards;

(f) Ensure that differences in the impact of armed conflict on women and men are widely understood and addressed.

94. United Nations organizations, civil society and NGOs should also support these actions and develop their own related programmes. These should include action to convene an international task force to develop an international consensus on common indicators on all types of violence and ways to measure violence by the end of 2001.